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General Assembly

FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
23rd meeting
held on
Thursday, 4 November 1993
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 23rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MONGBE (Benin)

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AGENDA ITEM 96: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 96: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT (A/48/182, A/48/338, A/48/359, A/48/430 and Add.1, A/48/484-S/26552, A/48/492, A/C.2/48/3, A/C.2/48/4)

1. Mrs. SADIK (Secretary-General, International Conference on Population and Development) drawing attention to the progress report on the preparations for the Conference and to the annotated outline of the final document of the Conference (A/48/430 and Add.1, respectively), said that the latter did not represent a full draft of the final document, but merely delineated the immense range of issues the Conference was mandated to address. Any attempt to renegotiate agreements and understandings reached at recent international conferences would be counterproductive. As the preparations continued, the centrality of population issues must be kept firmly in mind.

2. She invited the Committee's comments on the content and the structure of the annotated outline, noting that, while preliminary reaction thus far had been positive, there was a certain amount of repetition in some areas and the format adopted might not provide the needed flexibility within which to reflect clear, action-oriented proposals and commitments. Each chapter and section contained a sub-section on selected topics for recommendations, but it might be preferable to focus on activities.

3. At the second session of the Preparatory Committee, she had set out preliminary views on the incorporation into the outcome of the Cairo Conference of a series of 20-year goals, relating to reduction of mortality levels for infants, children and mothers, universal access to family-planning information and services, and universal access to and completion of primary education by all school-age children, including specific gender goals, with a possible extension to secondary levels. Strong support must develop around such goals if they were to be implemented.

4. In chapters XIV and XV the focus had been placed on resources. In some areas, such as those most directly concerned with family planning and population data, it would be not only possible but also important to spell out the expected costs. Finally, the real measure of the Conference's success would be the extent to which its proposals and recommendations were viewed, at both the national and international levels, as relevant, practical and even critical to sustainable development.

5. Activities at the national level were another important aspect of the preparatory process. The real impact of the Conference would lie in the revitalized sense of cooperation, commitment and interaction at the national level when issues of population and development were addressed. There were encouraging reports of substantial interaction within the governmental sector and the involvement of non-governmental organizations, academics, parliamentarians and others in the preparations for the Conference. With the assistance of extrabudgetary contributions, the Conference secretariat had been able to assist developing countries in undertaking such national activities as the preparation of the national population report. Fifty such national reports had been received thus far, and their analysis was already under way so that an

(Mrs. Sadik)

overview of national experiences could be available for the third session of the Preparatory Committee and for the Conference itself.

6. The adoption of Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/76 had confirmed the growing importance being attached to the Conference and the need for an adequate preparatory process. That resolution had strongly emphasized that the first draft of the final substantive document must be in the hands of delegations well before the third session of the Preparatory Committee, and the secretariat intended to comply fully with that directive. An important feature of the preparatory process had been the involvement of non-governmental organizations. Thus far, some 600 non-governmental organizations had been accredited or had applied for accreditation, and that number would be likely to increase in the coming months.

7. She expressed her appreciation to all the countries and organizations that had pledged and contributed to the financing of the preparatory process. Those resources had inter alia helped support the national activities she had mentioned earlier and had made it possible to fund participation by delegates from the least developed countries. Further contributions of any amount would be greatly welcomed.

8. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that the developing world had demonstrated its commitment to the International Conference on Population and Development by participating actively in the preparations. The members of the Group of 77 were studying the annotated outline, and several delegations would have comments to offer. They considered it essential for the Secretariat to pay careful attention to the views of the developing world. A full understanding of the changing economic, cultural and political conditions of the developing world was essential for effective support of the efforts of individual countries to incorporate population components into their development strategies.

9. The Group of 77 attached great importance to Part Three of the annotated outline concerning means of implementation. The action programme to be adopted should reflect the effective commitment of the international community to confront the urgent challenges posed by demographic factors in the developing world. Obviously, the volume of resources allocated and their effective use would be crucial to the decisions to be adopted in Cairo.

10. Mr. VAN DE CRANE (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that they had received the questionnaire and annex to be used in the preparation of national reports, and would be submitting their reports shortly if they had not already done so. They felt that the reports should make a substantial contribution to the work of the Conference, however the annex to the questionnaire seemed to reflect too greatly the point of view of developing countries.

11. With regard to the discussions to take place before the third session of the Preparatory Committee, they felt that the national reports, the current debate within the Second Committee and brief consultations, if needed, should be sufficient to finalize the document at the third session. The brief

(Mr. van de Craen, Belgium)

consultations should not last more than a few days and could take place in January 1994.

12. While the contents of Part Two of the outline were broadly acceptable, a balance should be struck between global matters, such as the link between population, environment and development, and individual reproductive rights and responsibilities. The document should be simplified and more action-oriented, with greater focus on an integrated approach to population issues, and the number of recommendations should be restricted and grouped by chapter rather than section. The objectives should be realistic and implementation of the objectives should be linked to the implementation of the conclusions of the other large forthcoming conferences on humanitarian matters.

13. Particular attention should be devoted inter alia to the relationship between population, environment and development; the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; sexual and reproductive health, including health responsibilities between partners and abortion; women's health, independently from family and infant health; free choice regarding the number of children as a basic human right; the needs of the adolescent population; and migration policy, including the economic constraints of the host country and the impact on the countries of origin.

14. Population policies should be neither discriminatory nor coercive. There should be increased administrative capacity to deal with population matters, and family-planning services should be extended and improved. National resources and international aid devoted to population should therefore be increased, however, the discussions should be focused on achieving the objectives rather than on funding. It should be possible to carry out the objectives which would be agreed upon at the Conference within the framework of the existing structures of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Population Commission.

15. Mr. MAHRAN (Egypt) expressed the hope that greater emphasis would be placed on the relationship of development to population issues; it might be dealt with as a separate theme in the document. Chapter III should place greater emphasis on the impact of consumption patterns, and reasonable consumption patterns must be defined for both developed and developing nations and supported by appropriate technology. It would also be useful for the outline to cover the effect of structural adjustment programmes on population and development. A linkage should be established between rural development and sustained economic growth. By the year 2000 Cairo would be one of 10 megacities. Such urbanization was detrimental to sustainable development. The promotion and financing of rural development should help to alleviate the problem.

16. The topic of male responsibilities and participation in population programmes (para. 17 of the outline) should be more fully elaborated, perhaps in a separate chapter, for women had borne too much of the burden for too long.

17. Chapters V and VI; chapters VII and VIII; chapters IX and X; and chapters XI and XII should be combined. Greater emphasis should be placed on efforts to close the gender gap; safe motherhood education programmes, programmes to improve the status of women in society and effective programmes to reduce illiteracy rates among women; the link between ethics and population

(Mr. Mahran, Egypt)

programmes; effective programmes for the elderly and school programmes in population and environmental protection studies; information exchange in the area of migration; support for the transfer of technology for the local production of contraceptives; special campaigns for men to raise their awareness of gender issues, their role in the family and their responsibilities for women's health; adequate financial resources for the implementation process; understanding the sovereign rights of each State and on policies and programmes tailored to local conditions. Moreover NGOs should be given the freedom to exercise their creativity in a non-partisan environment without undue bureaucratic constraints.

18. A number of special committees had been established in connection with the preparations for the Conference, as well as a citizens' advisory group to present a wider view of population and development. Special commemorative coins and stamps were being issued, and short films and books on population and development would be produced in both Arabic and English. The Conference would take place at the Cairo International Conference Centre, equipped with modern technology and facilities for interpretation services in eight languages. The host country agreement would be signed shortly. A parallel NGO forum would take place across the street from the main conference hall.

19. Mr. NEBENZIA (Russian Federation) said that the annotated outline of the final document provided a sound basis for the document itself, which should be discussed and agreed at the third session of the Preparatory Committee. That document should take into account the interests of all countries and ensure that their specific needs were adequately reflected. The Russian Federation was currently suffering from a natural decline in its population, which was the result of an unfavourable combination of fertility and mortality rates as well as emigration. The geographic distribution of labour resources and the age structure of the population were also creating difficulties. The market reforms currently under way were having a mixed impact on population issues. The conflicts on Russia's borders had given rise to a growing flow of refugees, and emigration and the brain drain were increasing. Such problems in the Russian Federation and other countries with economies in transition should be adequately reflected in the recommendations of the Conference, and should be addressed in the draft final document.

20. He supported the proposal of the Secretary-General of the Conference to include in the final document a number of indicators on key population parameters; such indicators should be realistic and obtainable and capable of inclusion in regional and national programmes and strategies. He commended the efforts of the Secretariat to inform the public about the preparations for and the basic objectives of the Conference. Finally, he supported Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/76 which recommended that the Preparatory Committee should become a subsidiary body of the General Assembly.

21. Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile), speaking on behalf of the member States of the Rio Group - Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador (on behalf of Central America), Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela and Chile - said that the structure of the annotated outline and the topics selected for inclusion in the final document were extremely appropriate. In view of the short time that remained before the convening of the Conference the discussion

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

should focus on substantive issues. In that connection, the Rio Group welcomed the adoption of Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/76, extending the third session of the Preparatory Committee to three weeks. It was also pleased that, under that resolution, the Preparatory Committee would become a subsidiary body of the General Assembly. It wished to congratulate the host country, Egypt, on the bold initiatives it had taken during the preparatory phase and express its full support for those initiatives.

22. The Rio Group attached great importance to the Conference as a vehicle for people-centred international activity, which should take into account the interrelationship between demographic factors and social and economic concerns in human development. He wished to reiterate the recommendations contained in the Latin American and Caribbean Consensus on Population and Development.

23. The Rio Group attached particular importance to international migration (chapter X). Efforts to control migration should seek to ensure that migratory flows were beneficial to both the country of origin and the country of destination, but, above all, to the people concerned. Migration policy must also take into account the causes for such movements. In past decades, rash, restrictive policies had proved to be inefficient, creating problems for both Governments and migrants. It was to be hoped that the importance of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families would be reflected in the document submitted by the secretariat to the third session of the Preparatory Committee. The design of appropriate institutional mechanisms and a clear definition of sources of financing would be crucial to the success of a new action programme.

24. Mr. ABDELLAH (Tunisia), speaking on behalf of the Maghreb States, said that they would be facing demographic problems for at least the coming two or three decades, and would need to implement clear population policies in association with other measures in order to ensure sustainable development. Greater attention needed to be devoted to population issues in each country and at the level of the Arab Maghreb Union. Lower mortality rates required greater control of birth rates.

25. The countries of the Arab Maghreb Union supported the Conference and hoped that it would shed new light on population issues and their relation to the environment and cultural and social factors. A Maghreb Seminar on Population and Development had been held in Tunis in July 1993 at which a Unified Maghreb Plan of Action had been adopted. It contained recommendations in the following areas: population, social welfare, education, health, employment and housing; migration, in particular from the Maghreb countries to Europe; enhancement of the role of women and development; women's health and infant mortality.

26. Sustainable economic growth required control and reduction of population growth. The funding countries and institutions were therefore called upon to bolster their cooperation with the Maghreb countries on population policies. The Maghreb countries wished to propose that debt service should be used to promote population policies and programmes.

27. Regarding the contents of the annotated outline (A/430/Add.1), Part Three should be developed further and more closely linked to the proposals contained

(Mr. Abdellah, Tunisia)

in Part Two. He proposed that the format of Agenda 21 should be followed and requested the secretariat to propose programmes of activity under each chapter of Part Two. The chapters on financial resources and transfer of technology should be revised. With respect to chapter X on international migration, the Maghreb countries stressed the need to preserve the human rights and dignity of immigrants in the advanced countries and to devote more attention to persons who were forced to seek refuge in neighbouring countries such as the victims of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Herzegovina, who were in need of urgent international assistance. Greater attention should be devoted to the problems of women and girls in rural areas and working women in the city and some thought should be given to follow-up on the results of the Conference.

28. Mrs. FREUDENSCHUSS-REICHL (Austria) said that, in view of the wide range of issues to be addressed by the Conference, it would be important to build on areas where consensus already existed. The annotated outline should reflect the kind of integral approach to population issues that the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had taken to environmental issues. The Conference should seek to place population issues at the centre of sustainable development, for which States had shared but unequal responsibility. As it was clear that the world could not sustain a Western level of consumption, efforts should be made to change consumption patterns and to ensure equitable allocation of the world's resources. Chapter III of the outline should therefore stress changes in the Western lifestyle, use of cleaner technologies and greater energy efficiency and resource conservation.

29. Freedom of choice regarding reproductive rights, reproductive health and family planning was vital. Numerous countries which had made an effort to provide such freedom deserved the support of the international community. The assertion that the cornerstone of reproductive rights was the recognition of the basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children (para. 46) would be devoid of meaning if options, information and family-planning services were not made available or if such freedom was suppressed on religious or cultural grounds. The rights of some 300 million women who wished to use family-planning services must be acknowledged. Her delegation hoped that strong recommendations would be made in that regard. The Conference should also stress human resources development through the enhancement of primary health care.

30. Referring to chapter XI on population information, education and communication, she noted that the population and development "message" could be very effectively transmitted through the mass media. In that connection, the Vienna Institute for Development Cooperation, an NGO in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, would organize a round table on "Population and Communication" for the media, Governments and representatives of international organizations and NGOs.

31. The final document of the Conference should be operational, action-oriented and realistic, and should contain a clearly defined set of goals to be achieved over a 20-year time-frame, particularly in the areas of infant mortality; maternal mortality; life expectancy; contraceptive use; and education, especially for women and girls. Those objectives should be included in the annotated outline.

(Mrs. Freudenschuss-Reichl, Austria)

32. The Conference should address the problems of all regions. Greater attention should be devoted to the social and resource-management problems and demographic situation of countries with transition economies.

33. Her delegation agreed that proposals for concrete activities should be included in every chapter and section under the heading "selected topics for recommendations". Too often, mere recommendations had failed to influence the lives of men, women and children, detracting from the Organization's credibility.

34. As for financing, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had demonstrated that, with the exception of a limited number of activities, allocations often had to be generic. In the case of the forthcoming Conference, the areas of family planning and population data might be designated for specific cost estimates. Follow-up to the Conference should reflect the vital contribution of the NGO community. Her delegation hoped that informal consultations on the institutional arrangements for the follow-up would begin at the earliest possible date.

35. Mr. AVALLE (Argentina), stating that his statement would complement those delivered on behalf of the Group of 77 and on behalf of the Rio Group, said that the annotated outline largely reflected the observations made during the preparatory process, but that the different parts of the document were not well linked. Part Three in particular did not seem to fit into the rest of the document. Perhaps a transition could be made by identifying a list of voluntary activities in each of the chapters in Part Two and qualitative means of implementing them. Part Three might contain a general statement on ways and means of facilitating national and international implementation of the concepts adopted elsewhere in the document. It should stress, in particular, financing, the participation of NGOs and the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference.

36. Referring to the recommendations of the Conference, his delegation believed that it would be much more useful to propose a menu of activities from which countries could select, depending on their particular cultural, historical, social and religious situations. In conclusion, considering that the Conference was supposed to deal with the links between population and sustainable development, chapters III, IX and X did not sufficiently take into account the international economic situation and its impact on countries' demographic trends.

37. Mr. BOUCHER (World Bank) said that population dynamics had now shifted: fertility rates were declining in many countries, but population increase was creating unprecedented pressures on the social infrastructure. Together with international migration and the AIDS epidemic, such factors were forcing Governments and supporting institutions to adopt a broader strategic response. Many donors were re-examining their roles and an increasing number of clients of the World Bank were seeking to work with the Bank on population issues and to borrow for population components as well. At the same time, the Bank had been increasing its capacity to work with United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). There had been a shift from a few large projects devoted mainly to construction of facilities to a larger number of more

(Mr. Boucher)

targeted projects dealing with contraception, training, social marketing and management information. The President of the World Bank would address the International Conference on Population and Development on the Bank's role in implementing the Cairo agenda and the Bank would also present a paper on its view of the population problem and the role of the Bank in addressing it.

38. Regarding the synergies between family planning and broader social development efforts, a demand for smaller families could be promoted by measures to improve health and reduce infant mortality, measures to improve access to education, particularly for girls, and measures aimed at reducing poverty and raising income levels. The total commitment of the World Bank on population, health and nutrition amounted to $1.8 billion in 1993. The Bank's investments in maternal health and safe motherhood were 10 times what they had been in 1986. Its investments in education were increasingly aimed at keeping girls in school. The share of the Bank's portfolio devoted to the social sectors had grown from 6 to 14 per cent in the past five years. There was a need for a more specialized technical capacity and a more focused effort at the operational level. Its recent reorganization had further strengthened the Bank's capacity for population work at headquarters and in its regional operational units. A vice-presidency had been established for human resources development and operations policy. The human resource sectors would acquire additional staff in 1994 and the Bank was working to train existing operational staff for population work.

39. Mr. OSVALD (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said the task of the International Conference on Population and Development was to tackle imbalances between population growth and available resources. Population growth must be slowed in order to enable countries to achieve sustainable development. The more affluent societies had the responsibility of improving their management of their own and global natural resources.

40. Population size and rate of growth should be considered in the context of the society of which they were a product. Population policies must include many different sectors of society and there was seldom only one response to population pressures. The annotated outline of the final document of the International Conference should make those links more apparent. The effectiveness of population measures was determined to a large extent by the scope and content of social priorities, gender policies, health and education policies and overall economic policies. The Nordic countries were in favour of a multifaceted approach based on the individual, human dignity and rights.

41. The empowerment of women was a prerequisite for social development. The improved economic and social status of women had a positive effect on unsustainable fertility rates. Measures to improve women's rights must therefore be at the core of any serious action in the field of population and development. Two key areas were the education of women and the improvement of their economic and legal rights. At the same time, the annotated outline should place greater emphasis on the need to change the attitudes and responsibilities of men.

42. The issue of adolescence and young people should be placed squarely on the agenda of the Conference. In many societies, teenage sexuality was an issue

(Mr. Osvald, Sweden)

that the public and decision-makers tended to avoid. Inequalities between the sexes were very often the outcome of behaviour that young men and women had learned to accept as normal. Sex education and adequate contraceptive services for young people were therefore a cornerstone of any set of measures aimed at achieving gender equality and health goals.

43. Reproductive rights and reproductive health, including family planning, were crucial. Individuals must have access to varied and quality services in that area, regardless of where they lived. That was their right and an absolutely fundamental requirement.

44. National Governments must formulate and implement policies that ensured a sound balance between population growth and resources. External assistance, which could play an important role in initiating or helping to set up a programme, should be seen as a complement to national efforts. In the area of assistance to population-related issues, the Nordic countries were in the forefront and intended to raise their level of commitment as a group. The Nordic countries strongly advocated the concept of partnership in development, which should be reflected in the documents for the International Conference.

45. The Conference should adopt realistic and operational resolutions. In that respect, the final document should be made much stronger. Member States must ensure that there would be concordance between the goals adopted in Cairo and the ones that would emerge from the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women.

46. In May, the Preparatory Committee for the Conference had discussed the issue of global quantitative goals. Planning of that type should be carried out with extreme caution. Such goals must make sense at the national level. Moreover, goals that in some circumstances could be abused in order to legitimize various kinds of coercion must be avoided. National goals should be linked to the availability of services of various kinds, for instance in the fields of education, child care or reproductive health.

47. Mr. CUI Tiankai (China) said that, as a populous developing country, China attached great importance to the International Conference on Population and Development. The final document adopted at that Conference should reflect the international community's heightened awareness of the relationship between population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development and should provide guidelines for international cooperation in the field of population in the coming decade.

48. The question of population was a question of development. Excessive population growth and overconsumption, which outpaced productivity and overburdened the environment, hindered economic and social development, aggravated poverty and underdevelopment and caused environmental degradation. Part One of the final document, which contained the preamble and principles, should deal with the interrelated issues of overpopulation, poverty, economic development and environmental protection in a comprehensive and integrated manner.

(Mr. Cui Tiankai, China)

49. Different countries were faced with different circumstances. It was therefore only logical for countries to formulate their own population policies and objectives as well as programmes, priorities and measures designed to achieve those objectives in the light of their economic and social development. That was the sovereign right of countries, which should be respected without any outside interference.

50. Survival and development were the most fundamental and pressing challenges faced by most developing countries. The right to development should therefore be included in the final document as an important principle since it was in keeping with the actual needs of most of the world's population.

51. In order to make the final document more comprehensive and responsive to the needs of developing countries, such areas as the elimination of hunger and malnutrition, food security, alleviation of natural disasters, improvement of human settlements and human resources development should be added to the programme. Some areas, such as the elimination of poverty and the improvement of the status of women, should be further strengthened. In its current form, the annotated outline did not expressly provide for the means of implementation nor did it spell out practical follow-up activities. That shortcoming should be redressed in the course of the preparations for the Conference.

52. In order to achieve the objectives of the Conference, the international community should make concerted efforts to promote cooperation in the fields of population and development. The developing countries should take measures to build up their own capacity and set priorities, and the developed countries and international organizations should endeavour to improve the international economic environment and provide the developing countries with the necessary international assistance in order to help them reduce population growth, promote economic development and eliminate poverty. On the basis of the consensus to be reached at the International Conference, the competent international organizations in the field of population and development, particularly those of the United Nations system, should strengthen their coordination, improve efficiency, make full use of their respective expertise and adopt practical and effective measures. The mandates of those organizations and the division of labour among them should be clearly defined and their resources should be provided on an adequate, assured and predictable basis.

53. Mr. MARRERO (United States of America) said that his delegation fully supported the aims and objectives of the International Conference on Population and Development. The preparations for the Conference had already increased global awareness of population issues and had provided opportunities for new groups to learn about population. They had also helped to break down institutional and sectoral boundaries and promote the rapid diffusion of knowledge and ideas. The expert meetings, regional conferences and other meetings at the national and international levels had contributed to that process. As a result, participation in the Conference was likely to be far broader than at any previous population conference.

54. The recommendations that emerged from the International Conference should constitute a clear agenda for future action and recommendations should therefore be clear, concise and action-oriented and reflect the urgency of the problems

(Mr. Marrero, United States)

being addressed. The Secretariat should keep the number of recommendations to a minimum.

55. His delegation hoped that the final document would state clearly that stabilizing the world's population was a goal that underlay and mutually reinforced all of the other goals that had already been identified. The international community must develop the means to measure its success in attaining important goals, such as improvement in the quality of care.

56. Issues of gender discrimination and inequality must be dealt with in order to achieve a number of population-related goals. Recommendations relating to families and compatibility between work and parental roles must also recognize explicitly that compatibility depended not only on adequate child care and other social policies and programmes, but also on access to the means to control the number and spacing of children. Women's control over child-bearing was fundamental to achieving full gender equality.

57. The language of chapter VII should be broadened to encompass more than access to currently available methods of contraception. Family-planning programmes should be viewed as part of broader reproductive health programmes that also addressed closely related programme needs, such as AIDS prevention, the contraceptive needs of adolescents and other unmarried people, and safe abortion and other pregnancy-related services. Family-planning programmes should be voluntary and respect individual reproductive rights.

58. The content and organization of Part Three might require further attention. While his delegation agreed in principle with the suggestion that chapter XI should be integrated into other chapters as appropriate, the recommendations should contain strong language urging Governments to strengthen information, education and communication programmes related to family planning and reproductive health.

59. In the area of capacity-building, the recommendations should also recognize some reciprocal obligations. Financial and technical support to increase national capacities must be accompanied by a commitment on the part of both donors and recipients to be accountable for how that support was used.

60. His delegation endorsed the strong chapter XIII, which dealt with technology, research and development, and recommended a broadening of the categories of research to include reproductive health and measures to address epidemiological, behavioural, programmatic and biomedical research needs.

61. In the area of implementation, estimates of resource requirements would play a vital role in discussions at the Conference. As far as possible, the recommendations put forward at the Conference should be supported by such estimates. In addition, in order to enable Governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to implement the final recommendations, it was essential to develop mechanisms that ensured accountability.

62. Mr. McKINNON (New Zealand), speaking on behalf of Australia, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, the Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, said that in mid-1993, the population of Pacific island developing countries had been estimated at approximately 6.3 million and population growth projections for the region were well above world averages. The problems associated with high population growth and urban migration were amplified due to the smallness and limited land areas of Pacific island developing countries. The consequences of the complex relationship between population, development, social and cultural factors and the environment were evident: urban drift, scarcity of land, environmental degradation, unemployment, deterioration in law and order, lack of educational opportunities, inadequate health facilities and services, teenage pregnancy, diseases caused by changes in dietary patterns and lifestyles, the erosion of traditional cultures and kinship systems and the increasing incidence of sexually transmitted diseases. In particular, the Pacific region needed to broaden its activities in the field of information, education and communication in order to protect its very young population from the scourge of drugs.

63. Solutions to population and development issues must depend on, and be found within, the context of the specific social, cultural and economic priorities and needs of each country and territory. In order to ensure the effective management of the complex relationship between population, development and the environment in the Pacific, particular attention should be focused on land availability, food security, employment opportunities, access to natural resources, and reproductive rights and responsibilities. It was also necessary to take into account the many strengths that Pacific cultures brought to the challenges of population and sustainable development. In that regard, the Port Vila Declaration (A/C.2/48/3, annex) stressed that population issues could not be separated from the issue of improving the social, economic, political and legal status of Pacific women.

64. The States members of the South Pacific Forum were pleased to note that the final document of the Conference would address the specific perspective of indigenous people on the interrelations between population, environment and development. They also welcomed the important contribution of the many non-governmental organizations that were active in the field of population and development in the countries and territories of the Pacific region. They supported the initiative taken by Pacific non-governmental organizations to convene a meeting on population and development in Fiji in February 1994. That meeting would be an important part of the Pacific region's contribution to the International Conference.

65. Mr. HORIGUCHI (Japan) said that the final document of the International Conference on Population and Development must be as clear, concise and action-oriented as possible. In that context, it was appropriate that the proposed annotated outline indicated the basis for action, objectives and selected topics for recommendations under each section. Parts Two and Three should be combined. A new Part Two might provide a summary of what was to be included in the final document and explain how that document differed from the World Population Plan of Action. The new combined Part Three could be shortened by further clustering topics. One possibility would be to cluster chapters IV, V, VII and VIII into a new chapter entitled "Health and the role of women", chapters IX and X into a chapter entitled "Migration", and chapters XIV, XV and XVI into a new chapter

(Mr. Horiguchi, Japan)

that would be entitled "National action and international cooperation". At the same time, every effort should be made to make each chapter as short as possible.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.

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General Assembly

FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
24th meeting
held on
Friday, 5 November 1993
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 24th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. MONGBE	(Benin)
later:	Mr. ARRELLANO (Vice-Chairman)	(Mexico)
later:	Mr. MONGBE (Chairman)	(Benin)

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AGENDA ITEM 96: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 96: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/48/182, A/48/338, A/48/359, A/48/430 and Add.1, A/48/492; A/48/484-S/26552; A/C.2/48/3, A/C.2/48/4)

General debate (continued)

1. Mr. VALENZUELA (Honduras), speaking on behalf of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama and Honduras, said that the six countries firmly supported the International Conference on Population and Development which was to be held in Cairo in September 1994 and would consider such important issues as rapid population growth and its consequences, the rights of women and children, AIDS, ageing, immigration, poverty and unemployment, and environmental degradation.

2. As members of the Group of 77, the countries of Central America supported the statement issued by the Group's ministers for foreign affairs at the end of their seventeenth meeting in which they had reaffirmed the importance of the link between population and development and called on the international community to support social development programmes designed to improve the quality of life.

3. According to the Human Development Report 1993 published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 90 per cent of the world's population was virtually excluded from participation in the political, economic, social and cultural activities which determined their everyday living conditions. The resources of the richest countries should be distributed more fairly in order to enable the poorest peoples to participate in development. At the same time, efforts must be made at the national level to reduce birth rates in the regions where population was growing fastest. The eradication of absolute poverty and the improvement of health and education services and the status of women would help to slow down and balance population growth. In that connection, attention should be paid to the State of World Population Report 1993 which requested countries to take immediate and decisive action to achieve a balance between population, consumption and development.

4. Latin America was going through a period of demographic transition marked by changes in its mortality and fertility rates and in its growth rates. But the trends were not uniform in all the countries of the region. In the 1950s the fertility rate had been six children per woman on average, but now it was only 3.5 in the 1990s. However, the average in Central America was five children per woman and even eight or higher in some rural areas. In the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean the rural exodus had been so rapid that the proportion of urban dwellers in their population was now the highest in the world - an average of 70 per cent of the total population.

5. Despite a reduction in population growth and an improvement in basic services, the profound economic crisis in the region in the 1980s had had a serious impact on social programmes and therefore on their beneficiaries as well. Although the economic situation of most of the countries was improving in the 1990s, the development programmes would have to be given a human dimension

(Mr. Valenzuela, Honduras)

by redirecting them towards the social sector in order to improve inter alia the situation of the most disadvantaged groups. According to estimates of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), there were at present 200 million people in the region living in poverty, i.e. about 50 per cent of the population, and they were concentrated in urban areas. Thus, although the social and economic conditions in the region had undergone a relative improvement since the crisis, the living conditions of the population had deteriorated. There was no doubt that economic growth, tax reforms, an improved system of tax collection, the reduction of military budgets, administrative reforms and the receipt of development funds would equip the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean with the necessary means to build up their social programmes.

6. It was a matter for concern that despite the excellence of its work the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which had received financial support from the European Community and the Nordic countries in particular, did not have sufficient resources to implement the many planned programmes in almost 140 countries. The international community must therefore increase its support of the Fund. It was to be hoped that UNFPA would thus be able to continue to provide the financial and technical services which countries needed in order to maintain sustainable development.

7. Mrs. SYLVESTER (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the countries members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the CARICOM countries endorsed the emphasis given by the Secretary-General in document A/48/430 to the central importance of the human being in all questions of population and development and the need for population policies and programmes to be based on the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals and couples. The Secretary-General had also reaffirmed the right of couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children, as stated in the World Population Plan of Action, and he had emphasized that family planning services should be voluntary, accessible, acceptable and affordable in order to promote maternal and child health.

8. The countries members of CARICOM shared the view of the Preparatory Committee that the empowerment of women was an essential factor in achieving population objectives, sustained economic growth and sustainable development, and that women's participation at all levels of policy-making should be increased. There was also an inextricable linkage between population, environment and development. However, the small island and coastal countries of CARICOM had particular population needs which would require a subregional approach. The socio-economic statistics indicating that some of them enjoyed a relatively high level of prosperity were misleading. In fact, their capacity to generate self-sustaining economic growth was dependent on regional integration and intraregional and extraregional trade.

9. The high rate of adolescent fertility had serious implications for the health, education and employment opportunities of young mothers. AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases were increasing in the subregion and imposing a burden on society. In addition to causing a shortage of qualified personnel, emigration also had demographic consequences. Those difficulties and the other problems affecting human resources development were exacerbated by structural

(Mrs. Sylvester, Antigua and Barbuda)

adjustment policies and an external trade environment which had a detrimental effect on the standard of living. Furthermore, the widespread poverty, which had increased in the 1980s, had resulted in a decline in personal incomes, particularly among the poorest people, and had forced Governments to use a part of their scarce resources to erect safety nets to help the disadvantaged groups.

10. The countries members of CARICOM, in collaboration with UNFPA and various non-governmental organizations, had begun to address their problems. For example, family planning programmes had led to reductions in population growth rates and wider use of contraceptives. Through its regional office in Jamaica UNFPA had implemented a number of regional programmes designed to incorporate sex education and preparation for family life in the school curriculum; it helped to fund clinics dealing with adolescent needs and supported the training of nurses, midwives and medical personnel. Many UNFPA-supported projects had AIDS-education components and were designed to encourage responsible sexual behaviour. UNFPA must urgently increase its assistance to the CARICOM countries because of their unique population problems. They would also welcome an increase in the number of advisers assigned to the UNFPA country support team based in Santiago, Chile, and thought that some of them should be seconded to CARICOM.

11. Using resources allocated by the UNFPA Trust Fund for the International Conference on Population and Development, 1994, national committees on population had been established to coordinate preparatory activities for the Conference. In that context, a preparatory meeting of regional government experts on population and development in Latin America and the Caribbean had been held in Saint Lucia in October 1993 under the auspices of ECLAC, UNFPA and the Latin American Demographic Centre in order to forge a collective strategy on population and related issues.

12. The Cairo Conference would present the international community with an excellent opportunity to implement the quantitative goals on population within the proposed time-frame of 20 years. The goals should take regional and national variations into account. However, if they were to be achieved in the desired time-frame, additional financial resources would be required and adequate provisions would be needed for the follow-up to commitments to be made at the Conference, including mechanisms for review and appraisal. Furthermore, the issues and recommendations of the final Conference document should be forward-looking, operational and pragmatic.

13. Mr. KALPAGE (Sri Lanka) said that the population explosion was a grave problem that impeded the achievement of sustainable development. Population concerns must be at the centre of action on economic, social and environmental issues; they no longer could be sidelined in the development debate. In that regard, the Tenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries held in Bali in September 1992 had decided to convene a ministerial meeting to strengthen cooperation between those countries on population issues.

14. In that regard, it was of vital importance to focus efforts on human resources development by paying particular attention to health, education, employment and gender issues, as well as to population distribution and international and national migration, all questions which were critical aspects

(Mr. Kalpage, Sri Lanka)

of the development process. Youth was the most dynamic sector of any society. In his country youth accounted for a high percentage of the population, and the Prime Minister had proposed at the meeting of the heads of Government of Commonwealth countries in Cyprus that a world summit on youth should be convened. The participants had adopted the proposal.

15. The Cairo Conference also should consider issues relating to resource mobilization and allocation, the role of Governments and non-governmental organizations, as well as international cooperation. It was to be hoped that the Conference would emphasize the social, cultural and economic aspects of population problems and propose specific measures on those matters. High-level political commitments were needed in that regard. South-South cooperation in that field would promote political commitment on the part of Governments of the developing countries and enhance the competence of national bodies through technical cooperation.

16. The meeting of the group of experts on population of the non-aligned countries held recently in Bali had identified various modalities for cooperation among those countries on population issues. Those modalities, which should be implemented at the subregional, regional and international levels, defined important strategies which the Conference could develop to address population problems during the coming decade.

17. His Government took an active interest in population management and human resources development; it had implemented an integrated programme which had yielded remarkable results. His country's social indicators were among the best in the world: a literacy rate of 90 per cent, a life expectancy of 72 years, a birth rate of 20 per thousand inhabitants and an infant mortality rate of 90 per thousand live births; that was all the more remarkable in a country with a relatively low per capita income (470 dollars). However, those achievements could be sustained only if the necessary resources were available to the country on a continuing basis. Low-income countries that had achieved a satisfactory level of human resources development should continue to be provided with assistance until self-reliance was achieved. The international community therefore should continue to support those countries in order to enable them to consolidate their achievements with respect to population and development. His delegation also welcomed the efforts made by UNFPA to prepare for the Conference and believed that the annotated outline of the final document provided an excellent starting point.

18. Mrs. TOMKINSON (Australia) said that the key issues which her country would like to see addressed at the Cairo Conference were the linkages between environmental degradation, population distribution and poverty, issues relating to the status of women and indigenous people, population movements, reproductive rights, health and mortality and population ageing. The question of the relationships between environment, population and poverty was complex and incorporated many factors, inter alia, consumption patterns, changes in technology, population distribution and urbanization. The interaction between those issues required increased attention. The principles of sustainable development required the integration of environmental and population considerations into all aspects of decision-making.

(Mrs. Tomkinson, Australia)

19. In view of the linkages between the advancement of women and economic and social development, the discussion of women's issues should not be confined to chapter IV of the annotated outline of the final document; while improvements in the status of women were important in their own right, they also had a substantial positive impact on family health, fertility and, indirectly, the environment.

20. The proposed universal declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples and the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People rightly demonstrated the increasing prominence of those issues in the international community; the preparatory process for the Conference therefore should place greater emphasis on them. Although population movements of an unprecedented scale were largely voluntary and controlled by Governments, irregular migrations posed a serious problem; durable solutions to the problem of refugees must be found, the best of which would be repatriation in dignity and safety.

21. The development of family planning services should be based on the principles of social justice and on a firm commitment to freedom of choice in the use of such services. Family planning information was crucial. The idea of exerting population "control" should be abandoned; population targets were inappropriate since they led to the adoption of coercion in family planning programmes.

22. Her country had reservations about setting unrealistic financial targets for donors with respect to population activities. It would do its best to reach the target recommended by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) of 4 per cent of official development assistance for that purpose by the year 2000.

23. In regard to the actual structure of the draft final document, she commented that Part Two, "Choices and responsibilities", gave a greater place to the basis for action than to the action itself, an imbalance which should be corrected. The distinction between national and international responsibility for the implementation of the recommendations was not made clear. Part Three of the text, on means of implementation, required further work, in particular on capacity building and national and international implementation.

24. In Australia, the preparations for the Cairo Conference were being overseen by a national committee which was conducting community consultations on the basis of the draft national report on population. The final national report would be made available to the Conference secretariat in the near future.

25. Mr. Arrellano (Mexico), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

26. Mr. BAILLARGEON (Canada) said that he was pleased that the annotated outline of the final document reaffirmed the importance of the individual and of his or her choice and behaviour in its consideration of demographic balance, sustainable development and international migration. It was essential to respond to the individual's needs for economic and social development and to ensure informed choice, especially in regard to family planning.

(Mr. Baillargeon, Canada)

27. Though there could be some value in setting 20-year goals, it must be recognized that praiseworthy goals did not necessarily translate into worthwhile programmes. Goals could not be imposed from outside: they must correspond to specific national realities and be acknowledged both by Governments and their peoples. Realizing those aspirations would necessarily involve action in different sectors across a series of programmes and policies. If the Cairo Conference helped countries to identify the appropriate blend of policies and programmes that needed to be adopted to accelerate progress towards those goals, significant progress would have been made.

28. On the question of partnership, the participation of representatives of civil society in the preparations for the Conference had enriched the debate considerably and was a source of satisfaction. Continued efforts in that direction should be encouraged, not only in the period leading up to the Cairo Conference but beyond. Since individuals were at the heart of demographic and development concerns, civil society, in its broadest sense, must be involved in the achievement of goals in that respect.

29. He supported the thrust of the chapter in the annotated outline on reproductive rights, reproductive health and family planning. The Canadian Government, fully aware of the importance of the question, had recently organized a round table at Ottawa which had produced some excellent recommendations that the secretariat might wish to incorporate in the chapter. The recommendations drawing attention to unsafe abortion as a major public health concern merited particularly careful attention.

30. On international migration, the Preparatory Committee secretariat had succeeded in reflecting in an able and sensitive manner the consensus reached at the Committee's second session. The annotated outline contained the necessary elements for drafting recommendations that would capture key priorities in that regard, including the need to adopt strategies capable of ensuring sustained and sustainable development leading to the better management of international migration, the need to ensure that migration benefited both sending and receiving countries, the need to address the causes of refugee movements, and lastly, the need to protect the right of asylum. In that connection, it would be useful to list the relevant existing international instruments in the chapter on principles.

31. The chapter of the annotated outline on follow-up would need to be clearly formulated. The recommendations should not be too many or too complex, since it was essential for all citizens to be active in working towards the realization of the intentions expressed. Since the Cairo Conference would not be able to address all the issues falling under the heading of population, arrangements should be made for the other conferences scheduled to be held subsequently by the United Nations, in particular the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, to carry on the work begun. An integrated approach would be needed to build on the achievements of the Cairo Conference. To that end, categories of goals should be established, so as to separate those issues that directly affected fertility levels from those that had broader social implications. The Canadian Government supported the proposal of the Secretary-General of the Conference to hold informal meetings on various topics

(Mr. Baillargeon, Canada)

in the next few months, including the questions of goals, principles and follow-up.

32. The second section of the chapter of the annotated outline on follow-up was more difficult to comment on because of the restructuring of the United Nations Secretariat. The restructuring under way could offer an excellent opportunity to deal more effectively with population challenges. Thought should be given to ways of harnessing the components of the United Nations system to promote the realization of the goals set at Cairo.

33. Mr. SOEGARDA (Indonesia) said that the issue of population was inextricably linked with the issue of development. It had become obvious that, in order to achieve sustainable development, the primary focus must be on people. Development programmes should therefore be people- and family-centred and population issues given due consideration, as had long been the case in Indonesia. In that connection, he was pleased to note that the Conference had attributed due importance to that linkage, in adopting as its overall theme "population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development". For that reason, the annotated outline of the final document should give greater emphasis to the relationship between development and population. One question that could be considered together with population was poverty alleviation; the concept of development was broadening and nowadays covered such issues as environment and fundamental human rights, particularly the right to social development.

34. Another important consideration that should be taken into account concerned differences in the level of social, economic and cultural development in the various countries. Although each country had the right to evolve its own development and population programmes, the improvement of the human condition in general demanded international cooperation and solidarity. The international community should not confine itself to mobilizing resources to implement the programmes in question. It should also contribute to capacity-building, promote research and the transfer of technologies related to population, and increase national awareness of the linkage between population issues and sustainable development.

35. Human resources development should become part and parcel of population policies. To meet the needs of present and future generations, it was important to promote education and training, expand employment opportunities, eradicate illiteracy and poverty and improve human settlements and systems of health care since sustainable development could only be achieved by a healthy population freed from poverty.

36. For population policies and programmes to succeed, community participation, including the participation of women and non-governmental organizations, must be enhanced. A more effective partnership was needed between Governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in order to develop population-related technologies and disseminate information on population questions. Greater emphasis should therefore be placed in the document on the need for increased awareness of population issues at the local, national, regional and international levels.

(Mr. Soegarda, Indonesia)

37. With regard to capacity-building, his delegation subscribed to the principle that, as indicated in the annotated outline, the fundamental purpose of mechanisms for the attainment of population goals was the generation of the capacity for countries to undertake programmes of action to further their own national development and improve the quality of life of their people. Strengthening of national capacity should therefore be a priority activity.

38. It was of particular importance that the commitments to be undertaken at the Cairo Conference should be translated into practical and realistic programmes. Thus, in each chapter, the wording "selected topics for recommendations" should be replaced by "implementable activities". Moreover, at the second session of the Preparatory Committee, it had been suggested that the Conference should adopt a set of quantitative goals to be achieved by all countries over the next 20 years. In order for countries to be able to attain those goals, they should be set in a realistic and flexible manner, and should not constitute an attempt to impose a rigid formula. His delegation looked forward to a discussion on the issue.

39. Indonesia, which had been privileged to have hosted the Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference (one of the five regional preparatory meetings for the Cairo Conference), would be hosting the forthcoming ministerial meeting on population of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. His Government trusted that that meeting would be able to contribute valuable inputs to the International Conference process. It also hoped that the outcome of the meeting could be taken into consideration in the preparation of the final document of the Conference.

40. Mr. SINGH (Fiji) said that despite the wide differences in their social, economic and political conditions, as well as cultural and religious values, countries in the South Pacific shared many common concerns in regard to population and development. Those concerns were reflected in the Port Vila Declaration on Population and Sustainable Development, to which his delegation fully subscribed.

41. The different chapters of the annotated outline of the final document were addressed in the Port Vila Declaration as a reflection of the region's position with regard to the various conceptual issues, as well as the region's aspirations for the Cairo Conference. All the regional organizations of the South Pacific would be working closely together to ensure that their common position was fully reflected in the final document.

42. Fiji had submitted its national report on population to the Conference secretariat. That report reflected clearly the many population and development problems with which his country must deal within the context of its own social, cultural and economic priorities.

43. The high population growth of the mid-1970s had put increasing pressure on Fiji's scarce resources, and the increasing number of young people entering the job market meant that more employment opportunities had to be created and more resources allocated to job training. The emigration of skilled workers to the more developed Pacific Rim countries further aggravated the situation. A small

(Mr. Singh, Fiji)

island nation such as Fiji could not sustain a large population growth which was incompatible with sustained improvements in the standard of living. Government policies therefore recognized two broad development goals relating to population. The first was to maintain a population growth rate below 2 per cent per year through an integrated approach to family planning. The family planning programme was implemented by the Ministry of Health with the assistance of non-governmental organizations providing information dissemination, education and communication programmes. A programme to raise the status of women through education and modern-sector employment opportunities was also being pursued. Action in that area would also have beneficial consequences in other sectors, such as improved family health and a rise in the age at marriage, which could help significantly to lower fertility rates. The second goal was to equip the population with employment-related skills through a comprehensive programme of school reform at all levels.

44. In his view, the annotated outline of the final document was a useful text which would help delegations focus on the central purpose of the Conference. His delegation attached special importance to the following points: promotion of sustained economic growth that would simultaneously address population growth, alleviation of poverty and reduction of social inequality; formulation of measures to promote greater harmony among population, resources, environment and development; integration of women in population programmes and in decision-making; recognition of the distinct perspective of indigenous people on aspects of population and development; improvement of access to family-planning services and to primary health care; cooperation of countries of origin and countries of destination on international migration; training of personnel for the formulation, implementation and monitoring of population programmes; setting up of new guidelines to satisfy the growing resource requirements of population programmes; and putting in place of appropriate mechanisms for assessing progress made in achieving the objectives of the action programme to be adopted by the Cairo Conference.

45. His country was committed to addressing population and development issues in an integrated manner and to promoting the attainment of the objectives of the Cairo Conference. The enormous efforts that had been expended in preparations for the Conference should ensure its success, and it was to be hoped that the plan of action that would be adopted would assist all countries in addressing their population problems and in accelerating the social and economic well-being of their peoples.

46. Mr. OLISEMEKA (Nigeria), commenting briefly on the annotated outline of the final document of the Conference (A/48/430/Add.1), said that the outline was crucial, although still preliminary, and that in order to be relevant, the final document must be detailed, realistic, pragmatic and implementable. The process of preparing it should keep sterile debates on principles to a minium and concentrate instead on concrete measures and specific actions that would be required, on a global level, to resolve the issues of population, economic growth and sustainable development.

47. The 1994 Conference must build upon knowledge accumulated during the last decades on population trends and patterns, and attempt to resolve the systemic problems that they engendered; thus, the policies applied must be closely

(Mr. Olisemeka, Nigeria)

interrelated. The first part of the annotated outline (preamble and principles) appeared to be adequate and reflected the major global concerns on population and sustainable development. Emphasis should be placed, however, on the linkage between poverty reduction and structural adjustment programmes, as well as between rural development and sustained economic growth. The delegations at the second session of the Preparatory Committee had, in fact, held the view that population, environment and development were inextricably linked. A population programme must therefore integrate all development issues, thus helping to reduce poverty.

48. With regard to national activities, he said that his country had created a population commission several years earlier. That commission was responsible for designing population programmes, conducting censuses and keeping data on population issues. It had recently been strengthened and modernized, as attested to by the success of the last national census. The commission, in conjunction with other governmental agencies, in particular the Ministry of Health, had embarked on a campaign to disseminate information in the rural areas with a view to providing education on population matters and on patterns of sustainable development.

49. All ramifications of the issue of resource allocation, dealt with in chapter XIV of the annotated outline, should be addressed, while the issue of international cooperation reflected in chapter XV should be further strengthened. More attention should also be focused on the establishment of a follow-up mechanism. Policies should not necessarily dwell on macroanalysis but should address the specific aspects of the relevant population groups - especially the rural population that had been fully acknowledged in the annotated outline.

50. Mr. MUTHANA (Yemen) said that population questions represented a formidable challenge and had ramifications which extended into all domains. Many problems were encountered in that field, in both developed countries and developing countries. Rapid population increase had negative and far-reaching consequences at the economic, social and ecological levels. Societies were endeavouring, taking into account their culture, their values and their traditions, to achieve economic and social development within a just, equitable and democratic framework which respected the freedom and the rights of the individual and which would permit him to take his place in society.

51. Like the other developing countries, Yemen encountered serious difficulties as regards population and development, and was trying to devote its limited resources to priority programmes aimed at addressing the essential needs of its population, considering the individual as the pivot, the creator and the beneficiary of development. A national population council had been established and its secretariat monitored the implementation of the population of policies and programmes outlined in the national strategy and plan of action regarding population. That body had organized numerous nation-wide activities relating to the Cairo Conference. Regarding practical measures and implementation plans, 1993 had been marked by the finalization of the integration process announced on 22 May 1990, with the organization of the first free and democratic elections, which had led to the setting up of the first democratically elected government. The policies of Yemen with regard to population had been outlined in 1991. It

(Mr. Muthana, Yemen)

was true that efforts had been made previously. However, it had been thought at the time that the problems regarding population would automatically disappear once the development goals had been reached. Currently, development activities encompassed population issues.

52. Numerous activities were under way in preparation for the Cairo Conference, not only at the government level but also by non-governmental organizations, which played an important role in that field.

53. His delegation was convinced that the International Conference on Population and Development, which was a follow-up to the Rio Conference on Environment and Development, would be in the peoples' interest.

54. Mr. KHANAL (Nepal) said that the linkage between population and development had long been understood but not well appreciated. The United Nations World Population Conference in 1974 had clearly spelled out the interrelationship between population and socio-economic development. Subsequently, however, particularly at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, population issues had not been given the importance they deserved, and even Agenda 21 dealt with those questions only schematically. The upcoming International Conference on Population and Development, to be held 20 years after the Bucharest Conference, was therefore the last call to the global community to compensate for lost opportunities and to outline a clear, specific and integrated plan of action. Past experience, technological innovations, progress made in literacy programmes and communications, backed up by additional resources available, after the end of the cold war, should greatly enhance capacity and effectiveness in dealing with population issues.

55. The newly elected democratic Government formed by the Nepali Congkos was fully appreciative of the population issues facing the nation. The eighth five-year plan formulated population policies and the Government had already taken measures to coordinate the activities of the various ministries.

56. The second meeting of the Preparatory Committee had helped Member States, coordinators and experts to bring into clearer focus the relationship between population and development and particularly the linkage of population with other development imperatives such as conservation of the environment and human resources development.

57. The proposed preamble for the final document was satisfactory, emphasizing the socio-economic situation of the least developed countries. However, his delegation was of the view that equal emphasis should be placed on capacity-building and international cooperation. An optimum balance should be found between the reproductive rights of individuals and the need to contain ever-increasing population growth. Population education played a vital role in the decision-making process of each individual, and that important concept could not be simply brushed aside. The very survival of human beings and the environment in the future depended on both a pragmatic short-term and long-term plan of action, the success of which hinged on population education.

58. The least developed and other developing countries needed additional financial resources with matching technology in order to combat the root cause

(Mr. Khanal, Nepal)

of all problems emanating from abject poverty. As long as that kind of poverty persisted, all national and international measures of population planning, human resources development and sustainable development would not be as effective as had been intended. The ever-widening gap between rich and poor could not deter the world community from its collective resolve to seek ways and means for the betterment of mankind. The upcoming Ministerial Meeting on Population and Development of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Declaration of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 relating to the issue and the Ministerial Declaration of the Least Developed Countries with regard to population were ample testimony to the total and collective commitment of the developing countries. What was needed was a proper assessment of population-related problems and their impact on development, environment and other social problems, and appropriate measures to obtain a balance between population, environment and development. The International Conference on Population and Development was without doubt the best place for such action.

59. Mrs. DOWSETT (New Zealand) said that, with less than 10 months remaining before the Cairo Conference, the current debate provided the opportunity to briefly reflect on the ground that had been covered and the direction to be taken. There was a solid foundation to build on and it was encouraging to see that a debate had begun on the means by which individuals and communities could contribute to the achievement of a sustainable balance between human numbers and needs and the resources of the planet.

60. The South Pacific region was considering the problems of population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development in a truly integrated way. The Port Vila Declaration, introduced the previous day on behalf of the South Pacific countries, had already provided the catalyst for the debate in that region. However, a number of issues still needed to be addressed. The Secretary-General of the Conference had made the point that the real value of the outline lay in the attention it drew to the enormity of the Cairo meeting's mandate. It was necessary therefore, as she observed, not to lose sight of the objectives concerning population: it was not a question of a rerun of Agenda 21.

61. The annotated outline was slightly unwieldy. It should be made less repetitious and more action-oriented. It would be necessary to find the right balance between principles, sectoral and cross-sectoral issues in order to ensure the internal consistency of the document. Women's concerns and gender considerations needed to be explicitly recognized in the principles. The principles section would also need to include references to the status and concerns of indigenous people and the importance of education for women. Attention should be paid to linkages between the different sections of the final document and references to financing and to technology transfer should be woven into Part Two, in order to avoid "telescoping" between Parts Two and Three.

62. The contribution that the Cairo Conference could make to international development would very much depend on the usefulness and relevance of the final document. The recommendations should not be peremptory. Instead, some reflection on promoting a whole series of activities was necessary; likewise, the institutional follow-up to the Conference should be given careful

(Mrs. Dowsett, New Zealand)

consideration. There was no need to create new structures, but rather a need to define more clearly the roles of the United Nations Population Fund, the Population Commission, the Commission on Sustainable Development and other United Nations bodies implementing and monitoring the results of the Conference in the United Nations development system.

63. On the whole, the annotated outline took account of the need to adopt an approach which recognized the uniqueness, real problems and needs of individuals. The Conference secretariat deserved praise for the work it had done on ageing and migration, and the emphasis given to the non-governmental and voluntary sectors as agents for change from the grass-roots level. Ensuring that women could make choices about their own lives was the basis for any action on population and development, for history showed that fertility rates declined when women had access to birth control. It would be interesting to see which activities would be proposed to secure their participation at all stages in the decision-making process. It was an issue which had all too often been neglected in discussions on fertility. The final document must also take up the issue of men's responsibility in such matters as fertility, disease transmission and the well-being of their partners and children. Lastly, the final document must unequivocally assign priority to universal literacy and education for women and girls at all levels. Chapter III contained references to consumption, but that aspect should be expanded upon. For instance, the section on population and the environment linked environmental degradation and demographic variables without acknowledging the impact of those factors on consumption patterns. The chapter on reproductive rights, reproductive health and family planning would be essential to the Conference. However, the issue of abortion was barely touched upon. It should not be overlooked, if the intention was to adopt an integrated approach to population and development problems. Lastly, greater mention should be made of indigenous populations in the final document, particularly in the section on population and the environment, since such communities played a vital role in environmental management and development on account of their knowledge and traditional practices. The final Cairo document must address the concerns of that important population group.

64. Mr. Mongbe (Benin), Chairman, resumed the Chair.

65. Mr. SIEBER (Observer for Switzerland) said that he had provided the secretariat with a detailed report setting forth his delegation's comments on the annotated outline for the final document of the Cairo Conference. Switzerland attached great importance to the success of the International Conference on Population and Development. The final document should not merely be action-oriented with a comprehensive approach to population issues, but should also include follow-up measures; such measures must be realizable and relevant to sustainable human development, must take account of the skills and experience available in public and non-governmental bodies and make the most of international efforts under way, such as the World Social Summit, the World Conference on Women and the preparation of an Agenda for Development.

66. The final document of the Cairo Conference should contain a concise preamble and a statement of principles; furthermore, chapter II must be expanded upon. He had noted with interest the proposals put forward by the Secretary-General of the Conference on setting targets for the following 20 years on

(Mr. Sieber, Observer, Switzerland)

infant mortality, the health of mothers and children, access to information on family planning services and primary education for all children. They should reinforce the social fabric which was indispensable for sustainable human development.

67. The question of financing had also been mentioned. Details of the anticipated costs should be provided. In order to ensure the successful implementation of population policies, strengthen the relevant administrative structures and upgrade family planning services, national resources should be supplemented by additional funding.

68. He welcomed the fact that the Preparatory Committee had become a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, in accordance with the decision of the Economic and Social Council. He was also in favour of extending the duration of the third session of the Preparatory Committee by one week and allowing two extra days for consultations prior to the Conference. So far the preparations for the Conference were progressing smoothly and Cairo should pave the way for a more socially just and predictable future.

69. Mr. KHAN (Bangladesh) expressed alarm at the recent trends of population growth in the developing countries. In the least developed countries it was obvious that while mortality rates were falling, they were still high, while fertility rates remained at very high levels. The result was that the population of those countries was growing fast. The consequences of the phenomenon on economic development were manifold and entailed, inter alia, a concentration of workers in marginal, low-productivity activities and wider disparity in income levels, as well as an increase in the demand for food and agricultural products. In response to the demand, many countries had overexploited their resources, accelerating the pace of deforestation, desertification and soil degradation.

70. The authorities in Bangladesh attached high priority to lowering the population growth rate and improving the economic conditions of the masses. They were striving to include family planning in their nation-building activities and to guarantee access to health care for mothers and children.

71. The Cairo Conference would be an appropriate forum for considering issues relating to population growth and general socio-economic development. It could provide a framework for promoting concerted efforts to implement policies and programmes for reversing current demographic trends.

72. Bangladesh was of the opinion that the final document should contain specific recommendations aimed at breaking the vicious circle of high population growth rates and poverty. It should also specify measures to improve the situation of women and young girls, above all through education, and highlight the importance of training greater numbers of staff in order to ensure proper implementation of population policies and programmes. Another matter to which urgent attention should be given was the improvement of demographic data bases in developing countries.

73. The success of population programmes and policies in those countries would depend to a great extent on generous foreign aid; hence the need to improve the

(Mr. Khan, Bangladesh)

chapter on international cooperation. The final document must set forth concrete and realistic measures for the rapid and full implementation of its recommendations.

74. Mr. KOZIY (Ukraine) said that the human factor must play a key role in the issues of population, economic growth and sustainable development. In his view it was essential that the Preparatory Committee should focus on those specific objectives from the outset of its work. A plan had already been adopted for the final document, which should take into account the interests of all groups of countries.

75. The recommendations to be issued at the Conference should be forward-looking, functional and pragmatic. In that connection, the objectives to be set for maternal, infant and child mortality, life expectancy, education, in particular for women and young girls, sexual equality and family planning should be realistic and take account of the socio-demographic situation in the different regions of the world.

76. The final document should constitute an action plan for future activities in matters of population. The Conference must also organize its work with due regard for the different international instruments adopted on the subject, in particular the Bucharest World Population Plan of Action, the recommendations of the International Conference on Population held at Mexico City in 1984 and the Amsterdam and Rio de Janeiro Declarations. The final document must also accurately reflect the results of the different regional conferences on population, in particular those of the European Conference.

77. The outcome of the Cairo Conference should have universal application and, at the same time, take into account regional diversity and country-specific conditions. In that connection, it was unfortunate that population issues in the Central and Eastern European countries had not been duly taken into consideration in the preparatory work for the Conference. The complex demographic and social problems confronting those countries were very different from those facing the more developed European countries.

78. In Ukraine, for example, the demographic situation was alarming; the population was declining at an ever faster rate and at the same time qualitative indicators were deteriorating: life expectancy was falling, mortality rates were higher than birth rates and morbidity rates were increasing. That deterioration of demographic indicators was attributable to socio-economic difficulties and was linked to the serious consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. At the same time, Ukraine did not have the necessary financial and material resources to implement an active population policy. It must therefore count on the support of the international community in that area.

79. The National Population Committee established in preparation for the Cairo Conference had already completed its report on the demographic situation and policy of Ukraine in the 1980s and early 1990s. His delegation hoped the document would be a valuable contribution to the work of the Preparatory Committee. His Government supported the efforts of the National Committee which would probably end up laying the groundwork for Ukraine's population policy.

(Mr. Koziy, Ukraine)

Within that framework it also planned to organize a scientific conference on the demographic situation of Ukraine, whose conclusions would be submitted to the Preparatory Committee.

80. Ukraine, for its part, was prepared to participate actively in the practical preparations for the Cairo Conference and in the elaboration of documents for it and hoped that the Second Committee's consideration of the question would expedite the preparatory process.

81. Mr. AL-DOSARI (Bahrain) stressed that the problems posed by rapid population growth and population distribution were the chief obstacles to development. In that context, the Cairo Conference was extremely important for the formulation of population policies and programmes aimed at establishing sustained economic growth and sustainable development.

82. It was disturbing to see that it was becoming increasingly difficult to ensure lasting improvement of people's quality of life. Poverty must therefore be reduced in order to meet the basic needs of populations and elaborate development policies and programmes that incorporated population elements. Similarly, development strategies must take environmental issues into account.

83. Concerning family planning, he said that policies and programmes for the protection of the family must be accompanied by an educational campaign to show how the goals set were consistent with the goals of all societies and did not destroy the family unit. While the family, as the basic unit of society, was given priority in social plans, support must be provided to educational services in the areas of safe motherhood, food and prenatal care in order to reduce the maternal mortality rate.

84. The Cairo Conference would help to strengthen international communication and it was to be hoped that it would institute the necessary mechanisms to help Governments implement the action programme it would adopt. All countries were free to implement whatever population policies they wished, in line with their culture, values and traditions, and taking into account their own specific socio-economic and political conditions.

85. Mr. UNNIKRISHNAN (India) recalled that, within the context of follow-up activities to the recommendations made at earlier conferences on population and poverty eradication, considerable efforts had been made to reduce fertility and infant mortality rates.

86. The developing countries, which accounted for more than 90 per cent of the current growth in population, were having to cope with growing development needs, and the conditionalities imposed on development assistance by certain developed countries, further complicated their task. His delegation remained optimistic, however, and hoped that, by combining their efforts, the rich and poor countries could attain their common goal, namely to guarantee a socially just and equitable quality of life to their people.

87. Poverty was currently the most urgent issue before the international community; it held the key to solving the others. Poverty alleviation should therefore be at the top of the agenda in international population, development

(Mr. Unnikrishnan, India)

and environmental policies. A high population growth rate was usually an indicator of poverty rather than the cause of it. Thus, in taking up that challenge, it would be important to find developmental paths which were not only environmentally sustainable but, more importantly, socially just and culturally acceptable. Poverty was generally linked to environmental degradation, as the have-nots were forced to exploit environmental resources in order to survive. The international community must seek to harness the vast latent resources of the developing countries in order to impart a sustainable dynamism to the world economy. For that reason, the developing countries considered the right to development as a fundamental right.

88. All countries recognized that environmentally sound development must be pursued but they often differed on how to achieve it. In that context, and in order to avoid duplication of efforts, the Cairo Conference should not consider issues such as those relating to the environment, which were undoubtedly important but were being discussed in other forums, and focus its attention on the central theme of population and development. Any population programmes or policies proposed should also take into account the country-specific conditions.

89. There was also a close interrelationship between poverty and unemployment programmes with regard to the alleviation of rural poverty, the reduction of disparities between rural and urban indicators and the crucial importance of maternal and child health care services. Efforts must also be made to strengthen community participation in family planning programmes, bolstered by the introduction of widely accessible medical facilities.

90. In that context, priority must be accorded to combating illiteracy and social backwardness in order to reduce the fertility and infant mortality rates. Women must be informed for they must know that they had the right to control their own fertility. Safe motherhood and child care were also essential. It was to be hoped that the Cairo Conference would strengthen measures to control sexually transmitted diseases and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

91. There must be a national consensus on the population programmes implemented in each country and all segments of society must participate in them.

92. Concerning the framework for the final document of the Conference, he congratulated the secretariat of the Preparatory Committee on its synthesis of the many recommendations put forward by delegations at its second session. While recognizing that the document was still in the drafting stage, he noted with concern that too much attention seemed to be focused on issues other than population issues. The Cairo meeting should not become an umbrella conference which incorporated elements already agreed on in other international forums or took up issues that would be dealt with at other conferences. Population issues must be considered as an essential element of a development strategy.

93. The Conference should focus on poverty alleviation and those issues relating to women which were directly related to population. It should deal with training women for self-employment as well as male responsibility and participation. The needs of adolescents, the integration of AIDS prevention with family planning and mother and child health care should also receive special attention. It was important to promote community participation and the

(Mr. Unnikrishnan, India)

creation of public awareness through information, education and communication. Although the role played by NGOs in that area was to be welcomed, those organizations could not be placed on the same level as member States and Governments, which should play a preponderant role in the deliberations leading to the Conference.

94. The issue of international support to population and development was of special importance in the present international economic situation. With the weakening of the multilateral trading system, the role of development assistance and investment flows took on increased importance.

95. In the annotated plan for the final document, some principles relating to population and development were highlighted in a way which might be inappropriate, as sound arguments could be advanced to include other principles. To focus on principles might detract from formulating a programme of action. His delegation could support a preamble incorporating important existing international agreements but felt that identifying principles at the present stage might be arbitrary and counter-productive.

96. The Indian Government was in the process of finalizing its national report, which would comment more specifically on the preparations for the Conference and it would spare no effort to ensure the success of that important meeting. It would support unreservedly a document for the third session of the Preparatory Committee which would incorporate its concerns in a spirit of consensus.

97. Mr. ENVERGA (Philippines) said that his Government had integrated population issues into its development programmes and had taken urgent steps to confront those issues. Specifically, it had adopted a development programme with definite demographic dimensions, stressing sustainable growth, poverty alleviation, generation of productive employment activities, reduction of socio-economic inequalities and attainment of social justice, and emphasizing people empowerment as the key element in the improvement of the quality of life.

98. President Ramos had recently launched a family-planning programme based on freedom of choice, the welfare of children and families and sustainable development. In accordance with its first principle, families had access to information on family planning so that they could make informed decisions on the basis of their aspirations, religious beliefs, moral convictions and economic situation. In promoting its programme, the Government's tool was persuasion not compulsion. It was also necessary to ensure the welfare of children and families; to that end what was required was to improve the living conditions and health of mothers and children living in poverty. The Government was committed to helping families to help themselves by providing them with family planning information and services. The programme involved a partnership between government agencies and non-governmental organizations, private sector groups, the commercial sector and religious groups.

99. Family planning was not, however, a panacea for poverty and underdevelopment; it must be matched by other programmes designed to increase wealth and distribute it more equitably under a national policy of development. Given the importance his Government attached to population concerns in the context of development, his delegation was committed to participating actively

(Mr. Enverga, Philippines)

in the Cairo Conference and hoped that a new consensus document on the full integration of population programmes into economic and social activities and sustainable development would be adopted.

100. His Government had also integrated the issue of human rights, including reproductive rights, into its population policies and programmes, one of the elements proposed by the Secretary-General of the Conference for the draft recommendations of the ICPB. It supported the adoption of comprehensive planning strategies focusing on human rights, population and environment linkages, gender relationships, responsible reproductive behaviour, reproductive health and sexuality. Coercion must be rejected as a policy to implement any and all programmes because it was a breach of human rights. Women and children were the most vulnerable segments of society and deserved the Government's protection.

101. Another issue which would be addressed by the Conference was that of migration. That issue was of great concern to the Philippines because, being an archipelago, it had a long history of internal and external migration. Migration affected the economy and development of the sending and the host countries. The potential of return migration as a channel for the transfer of technology and know-how to the migrants' countries of origin should be fully utilized.

102. Mr. HALLOWAY (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) said that UNIDO attached great importance to the Cairo Conference. Chapter III of the annotated plan highlighted the close interrelationship between population resources, the environment and development and identified poverty as a key challenge to development because of its association with illiteracy, malnutrition, disease and failure to recognize the importance of the status of women, all of which contributed directly to rapid population growth. It was therefore necessary to give absolute priority to the fight against poverty, employment creation and the improvement of health, education and housing and economic opportunities for women. It was in that spirit that UNIDO had reordered its priorities and given greater attention to the fight against poverty in its reform and revitalization programme. One of its objectives was equitable development through industrial development in terms of creating employment and expanding the productive base for the supply of essential goods. It was generally recognized that the gradual transformation of an agrarian society into an industrial economy and the subsequent increase in productivity were important mechanisms for combating poverty. The measures called for were developing industrial entrepreneurship, increasing the participation of women in industry, creating industry-related employment opportunities in poverty-stricken regions, decentralizing industrial development, promoting small and medium enterprises and developing rural industries.

103. He then cited several examples of activities carried out by UNIDO to develop small-scale industries in developing countries in Africa, Central America and Asia.

104. Two other key objectives of UNIDO were particularly relevant to the issues of population and development: the development of human resources for industry and environmentally sustainable industrial development. Central to UNIDO's

(Mr. Halloway, UNIDO)

concerns was the creation and continuous upgrading of the skills, know-how and motivation of workers required by industry. The importance of skilled human resources was borne out by the new patterns of industrial development and competition. The ability of a country to upgrade and reconvert industry-related skills was a major instrument in combating unemployment, promoting technological innovation and raising industrial productivity. UNIDO was also committed to preserving the environment by promoting energy-efficient and environmentally friendly industrial production and processes.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.